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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

PROBABLE SOVIET MOVES TO EXPLOIT THE PRESENT SITUATION

NIE-15

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The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force participated in the preparation of this estimate and concur in it. This paper is based on information available on 11 December 1950.

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1. USSR-Satellite treatment of Korean developments indicates that they assess their current military and political position as one of great strength in comparison with that of the West, and that they propose to exploit the apparent conviction of the West of its own present weakness.

2. Moscow, seconded by Peiping with regard to the Far East, has disclosed through a series of authoritative statements that it aims to achieve certain gains in the present situation:

a. Withdrawal of UN forces from Korea and of the Seventh Fleet from Formosan waters.

b. Establishment of Communist China as the predominant power in the Far East, including the seating of Communist China in the United Nations.

c. Reduction of Western control over Japan as a step toward its eventual elimination.

d. Prevention of West German rearmament.

3. Moscow has given no real indication that it will compromise on any one of these points. At the same time it has shown that it intends to press without pause for such closely related objectives as destruction of working unity among the Western Powers and thereby isolation of the US; the splitting of the Western peoples from their governments to the immediate end that Western efforts to rearm and the Western will to use atomic weapons will be undermined; elimination of the Western foothold in Southeast Asia; the minimization of British-American influence in the Near and Middle East.

4. Moscow has indicated that in attempting to capitalize on the present situation it intends to rely primarily upon a continuation of pressures rather than upon negotiation. As in previous tense situations, Moscow has continued to assert complete willingness to meet with the Western Powers at any time and on 3 November specifically requested a Four Power meeting on Germany. On the other hand, several of the evaluations currently being publicized by Moscow suggest, through their emphasis on US confusion and Western European pressure for compromise, a Kremlin estimate that circumstances strongly favor Soviet success in any conference that might be held. The Kremlin has given clear indication that its pose with respect to the desirability of big power talks is designed to strengthen its pretentions as the champion of "peaceful settlement," and does not reflect a Soviet intention actually to rely upon a conference approach, or to treat a conference as anything more than a place to consolidate gains already won or being won by direct action.

5. It can be anticipated that irrespective of any Western moves looking toward negotiations, assuming virtual Western surrender is not involved, the Kremlin plans a continuation of Chinese Communist pressure in Korea until the military defeat of the UN is complete. A determined and successful stand by UN forces in Korea would, of course, require a Soviet re-estimate of the situation.

6. The scope of Soviet bloc preparations and the nature and extent of Soviet Communist official statements and propaganda raise the question of Soviet or Satellite moves in other areas. The points that appear most critical are Berlin and Germany, Indochina, Yugoslavia, and Iran.

7. The Soviet Union has gone on record that it "will not tolerate" and "will not allow" West German rearmament. It has made clear that it considers that the only means through which it can be assured that German rearmament will not in fact be brought about is through the establishment of a united Germany in accordance with the Praha program

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(i.e., in such a way as to insure Communist domination of the whole of Germany).

8. The Soviet Union is currently increasing greatly the tempo of its pressure and agitation over Germany, particularly concentrating on building up a war scare in West Germany and Western Europe as a whole. Although there is an unusual note of urgency and a definite element of threat in the current campaign, it has so far not actually broken with the pattern that has been followed for some time. It appears, therefore, that Moscow is still attempting to achieve its objective of German unity under Communist domination through breaking the will of the Western Powers to resist and through intimidating the West Germans. The present trend, however, is of such nature as to suggest that these measures may soon be supplemented by more drastic action, possibly including a renewal of the Berlin blockade, "revolution" in Berlin, and attempted violence in West Germany. Despite repeated Communist emphasis on the parallel between Germany and Korea, it is unlikely in present circumstances that the Soviet Union will repeat the Korean pattern in West Germany unless it intends to precipitate general war.

9. An intensification of Communist efforts to secure Indochina is to be expected, regardless of developments elsewhere. The Viet Minh has clearly indicated that its objective is to drive the French from Indochina at the earliest possible date. The Chinese Communists have at the same time repeatedly expressed their support of the Viet Minh. They have, moreover, officially claimed that Western resistance to the Viet Minh is directed against Chinese Communist security. The Chinese Communists are already furnishing the Viet Minh with materiel, training, and technical assistance. If this assistance proves inadequate to enable the Viet Minh to accomplish its objectives, it is estimated that it will be supplemented, as necessary, by the introduction of Chinese Communist forces into the conflict, possibly as "volunteers." The extent of this Chinese Communist intervention, and whether it takes overt form, will probably depend on the degree of outside assistance furnished the French and the extent of Chinese Communist commitments elsewhere.

10. Soviet-Satellite pressures on Yugoslavia have not notably increased during the current crisis, although long-standing economic, political, and psychological pressures have been somewhat intensified. Under present conditions, such tactics probably will be unsuccessful, leaving direct military invasion of Yugoslavia as the only way in which the Tito Government can be overthrown. Satellite forces would be capable of achieving important initial successes, but, assuming effective Western support of Yugoslav resistance, secure occupation of that country and the establishment of a Yugoslav regime subservient to the Kremlin would probably require the direct use of Soviet forces. Present indications do not point at an imminent Soviet intention to launch either a Satellite or Soviet-Satellite attack on Yugoslavia. The Soviet Union, however, remains capable of launching an attack on Yugoslavia virtually without warning, and the possibility of such an attack cannot be disregarded.

11. The Soviet Union probably will not invade Iran unless it intends deliberately to initiate a general war. Present Soviet policy toward Iran appears designed to wean that country away from US and British influence, associate it more closely with the Soviet economy, and induce it to forego any thought of allowing Western armed strength to be introduced into Iran. This policy, which has so far met with considerable success, plus the disposition of present Iranian leadership to avoid identification with US policy and the military defeats of the UN in Korea, is probably considered by the Kremlin to be adequate assurance that Iran will not become a base of operations against the Soviet Union. Unless the Soviet rulers have decided that general war is imminent and that they must immediately secure every strategic approach to the Soviet Union, their probable present intention is to continue to keep Iran weak and distracted while accelerating efforts to bring a friendly government to power.

12. Beyond the danger of further Soviet-Communist action in these several local areas,

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there remains a possibility that the USSR may seize upon the present crisis to precipitate general war with the US. Moscow and Peiping have consistently and consciously stressed the threat of a new world war emerging from the current situation. At the same time the Kremlin continues preparations for action by its own forces. While the motivation involved may be to maximize war scare pressures in order to reduce further the will of the West to resist, the over-all situation is such that the possibility cannot be disregarded that the USSR has already made a decision for general war and is in process of taking steps preliminary to its inception. We are unable, on the basis of present intelligence, to determine the probability of such a decision having in fact been made.

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